

Career Development Grant Report

Douglas Waclawski

SXSW Education Conference 2018

I have never been to an education conference that was not for a specific topic such as leadership, technology or PLC's. Many of the sessions were general information, research or general practice. I did not receive as much readily applicable material or programs like I am used to, but I received good information that led me to some good ideas.

Here are some of the sessions that I attended, information learned and how I plan to use it.

Building Social Emotional Learning Network

Social emotional learning (SEL) is becoming more and more important with all the emotional and social problems students are dealing with including bullying, abuse of social media and school shootings. Since this is a relatively new area in education, the programs are still developing. There are a few programs that are available. Starting in elementary Oak Knoll School has developed the Compassion Project. In the middle school the NFL has developed a program called the Character Playbook.

At the high school level the Sandy Hook Promise is available free of charge. The Sandy Hook Promise is something that we just presented to our staff on 3-9-18 and we are looking to implement as I write this at HHS.

The Power of a Problem-Led Engineering Program

The Dyson Company has developed the "Dyson Engineering Project." They will send lessons and supplies to schools to promote engineering. The focus of this program is to develop female participation in STEM's, but also to integrate engineering in school in general. Their goal is to get students to rethink the world around them. This program has many elements that the Caring for the Kenai program integrates.

I want to start an Engineering elective and to integrate this in more classes where possible. If this year's budget cuts are mild and we don't lose too many teachers, I would like to start offering this for the 2019 school year. The Dyson curriculum would only be part of what is offered, but it is a good start.

Teaching the Gift of Failure

I have been trying to instill a Growth Mindset culture at HHS with some success for the past two years, but not to the extent I would like. Jessica Lahey, who was the last keynote speaker of the conference, has a message that I think truly helps improve Growth Mindset. She also breaks down information on motivation, resilience and assessment methods. She used humor with a no-nonsense attitude that promotes the message I want to send to my staff and students.

I plan on ordering her books, presenting this information to my staff, refining my philosophy of education based on her work and showing her videos to my staff at meetings and in-services. While she didn't provide new or earth shattering information, this was the most useful and affirming session of the conference. I will also use some of her ideas and insights when dealing with difficult parents.

Standing Up to Hate

Harassment and bullying from social media continues to be a problem at HHS and this session provided some data and an interesting solution. Here is a small sample of the data provided:

- 33% of all teens have been cyber bullied
- 50% of teens who have been cyber bullied don't know who is doing it
- Facebook is the #1 way to get bullied

This group of presenters suggest developing a visual narrative that can be sent online or in social networks to help deter bullying and for what students should do if it happens to them.

Most parents and students don't know or understand school policies on bullying or what should happen when an incident is reported. I plan to write a school newsletter article to parents explaining our policy and what they can expect when reporting bullying or harassment. I will also share this information with our Green Dot program for creating visual narratives. The goal is to have this group create their own visual narratives to share with our school community.



3-21-18